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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY
WASHINGTON

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December 30, 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable
William F. Raborn
Director
Central Intelligence Agency

SUBJECT: Foreign Reaction to Vietnam Peace Moves

Anticipation is building sharply in free world media as they assess the possibility that genuine and wide-ranging peace moves have been set in motion in recent days. Cautious hopes that these steps will lead to peace in Vietnam are accompanied by fears that their failure now could mean drastic and dangerous escalation and some see the war at a "crucial turning point."

Details of this overseas reaction are contained in the attached report.

Robert W. Akers
Acting Director

Attachment

R-196-65

EXECUTIVE REGISTRY FILE *V-1*



Research and Reference Service

FOREIGN REACTION TO VIETNAM PEACE MOVES

R-196-65

December 30, 1965

This is a research report, not a statement of Agency policy

The London Daily Telegraph voices an uncertainty frequently heard, but sees Moscow gaining leverage: "The wind that now seems to be carrying several straws in this hopeful situation could prove a deceptive gust. Speculation still has little to work on beyond the evident fact that the North Vietnamese leadership is divided, with Moscow's voice now ascendant at the expense of Peking's." The Ankara home radio sees evidence "that Moscow has leaped forward in the competition with Peking for influence in Hanoi, and Ho Chi Minh's apparently increasing willingness to negotiate" is reason enough to extend the bombing halt.

A "Glow of Hope"

Hope that some spectacular and solid development would emerge from the rapidly unfolding series of current moves was strongly apparent, even though commentators generally appeared to feel that definitive judgments must be deferred until the situation was less obscure. Some found the obscurity of the situation feeding their uncertainties. Liberal Dagens Nyheter, Stockholm, says: "Reports on Wednesday night attested to intensive diplomatic activity with many participants -- how sincere is not known. The truth probably is that a real peace plan does not exist on either side. The Americans must reckon with the possibility that a peaceful solution of the crisis, providing for some sort of controlled popular election, will give the liberation front a majority in South Vietnam."

But however qualified and wary, the search for hopeful portents was persistent.

Japanese papers spoke of "the Vietnam war at a turning point," and looked for "further advance of peace operations," with "U.S. and Soviet moves aimed at finding the possibility of a peaceful settlement."

"The world capitals were aglow last night with hope of a New Year peace conference to stop the fighting in Vietnam," says the conservative London Daily Express.

Beirut's pro-UAR al-Anwar believes 1966 "will bring peace to Vietnam," citing "the Pope's efforts and the discontinuation of the U.S. air strikes." Pro-Western Al-Hayat of Beirut is similarly hopeful, "providing the White House can resist the pressures of the Pentagon and its logic of bombarding North Vietnam back into the Stone Age."

Tehran's Ettela'at says that North Vietnamese receptivity to Soviet offers of military and economic assistance, "coupled with the pause in the air war by the U.S., revives hope for peace in Vietnam."

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